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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the role of transfer of native-language knowledge to second language learning proposes that language transfer is as much a sociolinguistic process as a psycholinguistic one. The term "sociolinguistics" is used in a broad sense to incorporate all social factors that affect language, both the relatively static characteristics of an individual or of a group and the dynamics of human interaction. The argument put forward is that while transfer may sometimes be a psycholinguistic overgeneralization from native to target language, it is often a sociolinguistic process and frequently an assertion of cultural identity. Three types of sociolinguistic transfer are distinguished: sociolinguistic rule transfer, pragmatic transfer, and socially-motivated transfer. Four major psychological purposes of transfer are also identified: accommodation to the speech of the listener, conformity to norms, negotiation of identity via linguistic choices, and self-expression. In addition to sociolinguistic transfer, sociolinguistic avoidance affects second-language performance. Both can be viewed as powerfully motivated by social psychological factors. Five pages of references conclude the document. (MSE)

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SOCIOLINGUISTIC TRANSFER:

A CLASSIFICATION AND DISCUSSION

by

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Applied linguists have long recognized that transfer from the native language (NL) affects development in a second or target language (TL). But there has been quite an evolution of thought since early research on transfer in the 1950's. At first, transfer was seen as the adoption of first language (L1) variants in the second language (L2). Then, it was recognized that distributional patterns of linguistic elements, not just the elements themselves, might be transferred. More recently, the notion of transfer has been broadened to include tendencies influenced by previous knowledge of a language--usually, but not always, the native language. Perhaps the most fundamental shift in our thinking about transfer relates to the acceptance of transfer as a process of indirect influence from the native language. Formerly, only the mechanical adoption of first language forms (or direct translations of these forms) was considered to be a sign of transfer.

This broadening of the concept of transfer to include native language influence has had both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, we have removed an unnecessary straitjacket--a literalism where only a mechanical reflex could count as transfer, where only exact replicas of first-language elements and patterns appearing in the second language could be considered evidence of transfer. Rejecting this artificial limitation is a step in the right direction. At the same time, however, this broadening now means that defining transfer has become a much more difficult task. There is no full agreement on the definition of transfer, let alone the precise role it plays in second-language acquisition (SLA).

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that language transfer is

as much a sociolinguistic process as a psycholinguistic one. The term "sociolinguistic" is used in a very broad sense to incorporate all social factors that affect language--both the relatively static sociolinguistic characteristics of an individual or group and the social psychological dynamics of human interaction. The chapter argues that it is not just the linguistic content, but also the motivation for transfer, that can be sociolinguistic. It classifies sociolinguistic transfer into three types: sociolinguistic rule transfer, pragmatic transfer and socially-motivated transfer. In addition, it discusses four major social psychological purposes of transfer.

Transfer: Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic

Most researchers today view transfer as a psycholinguistic process. It is undoubtedly psycholinguistic, but it is also sociolinguistic. The psycholinguistic approach focusses on the how of transfer--how the mind reasons in using previous knowledge. The sociolinguistic approach seeks to answer the why of transfer. It focusses on the motivation for transfer. Both approaches ask what may be transferred, but the sociolinguistic perspective emphasizes the social content and patterning of the transferred forms.

In presenting a sociolinguistic view of transfer, this chapter in no way denies the psycholinguistic dimensions of the process. It seeks to broaden previous work, not to refute it. It is founded on the belief that a narrow focus will be biased, even if correct within its own confines. Thus, there is no argument with Selinker (1972) who posited transfer as one of the five central psycholinguistic processes that constitute the causes of error.

However, since his groundbreaking study established the tenets of error analysis, other researchers have treated transfer almost exclusively as a psycholinguistic process, missing an essential part of its very nature.

They have also suggested that transfer and overgeneralization are interrelated. Taylor (1975) has argued that although interference and overgeneralization are different, they are basically "one psychological process" (p. 87). Brown (1980) has claimed that interference is a type of overgeneralization and that transfer and generalizing are inextricably related:

> Interference of the first language in the second is simply a form of generalizing that takes prior first language experiences and applies them incorrectly. Overgeneralization is the incorrect application of previously learned second language material to a present second language context. All generalizing involves transfer, and all transfer involves generalizing. (p. 87)

Kachru (1980, cited in Tanaka, 1983) has maintained that transfer and overgeneralization are interrelated and that transfer from L1 can motivate overgeneralization. Many researchers hold the belief that transfer and overgeneralization are essentially derived from a single psychological process. Adiv (1981) and Chimombo (1981) reflect this point of view by calling transfer "interlingual overgeneralization," and overgeneralization "intralingual overgeneralization." In fact, this terminology is now quite common, representing the view that (1) transfer is a psycholinguistic process and (2) transfer errors constitute one type of overgeneralization.

The argument to be put forward here is that transfer may sometimes be a

psycholinguistic overgeneralization from the native language to the target language, but it is not always such. Transfer is often a sociolinguistic process, frequently of cultural identity assertion. And in these cases, it fulfills the purposeful social psychological functions that all speech shifts do. In such instances, transfer is not an error or mistake, in the sense of an overgeneralization, because it does not result from a learner's misguided belief that a feature from L1 belongs in L2. Rather, the transferred item is there for a purpose. And to the extent that it fulfills a purpose, it may be said to be intentional, though perhaps at some unconscious level.

Before outlining four common social psychological purposes of transfer, it is necessary to identify what range of behaviors is intended by the term transfer. In order to do this, we can classify different types of transfer. First, I propose that we distinguish between psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic transfer for taxonomic purposes, although these two categories may not always be mutually exclusive in linguistic performance. Psycholinguistic interlingual overgeneralization is based on lack of knowledge, misunderstanding, or an incorrect hypothesis. It is part of the basic creative construction process (Dulay and Burt, 1973, 1974a, 1974b, 1975).

On the other hand, sociolinguistic transfer (whether conscious or unconscious) does not necessarily stem from an incorrect hypothesis. Lack of knowledge could be, though it is usually not, the source of the problem either. Rather, it seems to emanate from a clear (though perhaps tacit) understanding of social norms and sometimes a desire to achieve some social psychological purpose or sociolinguistic function. I propose that we recognize at least three basic types of sociolinguistic transfer and use

distinct terminology for them.

A Taxonomy of Sociolinguistic Transfer

The three types of sociolinguistic transfer are: (1) sociolinguistic rule transfer, (2) pragmatic transfer, and (3) socially motivated transfer. These categories are not always mutually exclusive or even clearly distinct in all cases, but there are enough instances of transfer which fit only one category that separate classification is justified. The categories of sociolinguistic transfer may be distinguished both in terms of their defining characteristics and in terms of the research tradition from which they emanate.

Sociolinguistic rule transfer is the transfer of an L1 variable rule, i.e., a rule which displays sociolinguistic variation in the sense that there are competing norms in the language which are used in patterned ways by speakers of different social groups. They may also vary stylistically. The study of variable rules grows out of the work of William Labov (1966, 1970, 1972a, 1972b), and research investigating this type of transfer is greatly influenced by the Labovian tradition. The rules studied have been primarily phonological and morphological, discourse phenomena being less specifiable in terms of precise "rules." Labov has classified variable rules into two major types: markers and indicators. Both are language specific rules, i.e., unique to a particular language, not universal (i.e., common to all languages).

Pragmatic transfer (also called transfer of sociocultural competence) is a second type of sociolinguistic transfer distinguished from sociolinguistic rule transfer because it does not necessarily involve the transfer of a

variable rule. In this type of transfer language learners may transfer their native language competence of a categorical rule--a rule with no first language variation. The rule is simply a social formula or prescription that native speakers of a language must follow. For example, in many languages greetings to professors or doctors require the use of the addressee's title without the first or last name. This is not a variable rule. It is a fixed social requirement. Transfer of this categorical rule to English would reflect knowledge of social conventions in the native language and transfer of sociocultural competence.

Much of the work done in this area stems from the seminal research of the anthropologist Dell Hymes (1964) on communicative competence. It therefore focusses on the social appropriateness of language use. The purpose is to discover how variation in language use reflects the attitudes and values of the speech community. Although social variation in language is described, the emphasis of this work is on discourse analysis, especially speech acts. And discourse, though variable, is not readily described as a series of variable rules in the Labovian sense. It is too complex, and there is too much individual choice involved. Content is so intimately fused with form that utterances are not highly predictable, unlike in phonology, morphology, or even syntax, where there is more likely to be a finite list of specifiable alternatives.

The research on pragmatic transfer has also been shaped by philosophers (especially Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) who introduced the notion of speech acts and led us to look at such things as apologies, compliments, requests, invitations, expressions of gratitude or disapproval, and refusals. These speech acts are believed to be universal, though naturally their

representations will be language specific. In this area, there is an increasing amount of work devoted toward discovering the extent to which the strategies and semantic formulas for apologizing, complimenting, thanking, refusing, etc., are in fact language specific or language universal.

Socially motivated transfer is a third and distinct category because it does not necessarily involve either sociolinguistic rule transfer or pragmatic transfer. Its content may not be social at all. What is crucial is that the material is transferred for a social purpose. A sociolinguistic variable rule may be transferred to fulfill a social purpose and so may a categorical rule that reflects pragmatic (sociocultural) competence. Likewise, however, second-language speakers could have social psychological reasons for transferring anything into the target language. If they fulfill some social psychological function in so doing, their transfer is socially motivated. This area is strongly influenced by the work of social psychologists, especially Howard Giles (1979).

Sociolinguistic Rule Transfer

Sociolinguistic rule transfer is a new and more precise term for a familiar type of sociolinguistic transfer previously proposed in Beebe (1980) and Schmidt (1977). It involves the transfer of an L1 variable rule into L2. That is, speakers choose to adopt variants in the second language following the first-language sociolinguistic rule or pattern.

There are at least two types of sociolinguistic rule transfer: (a) transfer of a sociolinguistic marker and (b) transfer of a sociolinguistic indicator. A marker is a highly developed sociolinguistic variable which displays both social and stylistic stratification (Labov, 1970). In other

words, it is correlated with nonlinguistic variables such as socioeconomic class, ethnic affiliation and age (i.e., social stratification) that might pertain to the speaker, addressee, audience, or even setting. In addition, it varies according to attention to speech and is subject to regular shifts in different linguistic contexts (i.e., stylistic stratification). When there is full social consciousness of a marker, it is called a stereotype (Labov, 1970). A sociolinguistic indicator, on the other hand, is correlated only with a nonlinguistic variable in the social context, such as the age, sex, or social class of the speaker. It is capable of reflecting social stratification if the nonlinguistic variable it correlates with (e.g., class) is measurable according to an ordered hierarchy. It does not manifest stylistic stratification to any significant degree. Therefore, individuals will have a relatively constant use of a particular variant, regardless of the formality of their speech. Nevertheless, it would be possible for linguists or perceptive listeners to use the indicator to identify such correlates as their social status or age.

Transfer of a Sociolinguistic Marker

Let us now look more closely at sociolinguistic rule transfer of the first type: transfer of a sociolinguistic marker. This type involves transferring a variable rule from L1 to L2. Non-native speakers transfer competing L1 sociolinguistic norms into L2, and adopt a style shift in the L2 which is influenced by the L1 style shifting pattern. Although there may be social motivation for the act of transfer itself, this type of transfer, like all sociolinguistic rule transfer, is more specifically characterized by the sociolinguistic meaning attached by the native speakers of the L1 to

the competing forms in their native language. In other words, the L1 contains a sociolinguistically based alternation. The forms and the pattern of alternation are both transferred.

Schmidt (1977) provided an early example of sociolinguistic rule transfer involving a marker. In a previous study, Schmidt (1974) had demonstrated that the TH variable is a marker of socioeconomic class which has three variants in Egyptian Arabic: a stop frequently used in speaking (but not reading), a sibilant occurring often in reading but less frequently in speaking, and interdental fricatives most commonly used in reading listed words. This statistically significant pattern in Arabic was found to appear at a statistically significant level in the English reading and listing of 34 male native speakers of Egyptian Arabic in a subsequent study (Schmidt, 1977). The English study was not designed to study socioeconomic variables, but later analysis of the data showed that there were significant differences between terminal and nonterminal secondary students. Thus, the study provided evidence that: (1) the TH marker of Egyptian Arabic was transferred into English along similar (though not identical) patterns of stylistic stratification, and (2) variation in English as well as the variation in Arabic reflected social stratification among speakers.

Beebe (1980) provided a second example of sociolinguistic rule transfer where a marker (probably even a stereotype) was transferred. Beebe (1974) demonstrated that Thais use /l/ or the Thai R variable an average of 95 per cent of the time even in interview conversation. They shift to trilled [r] increasingly at a statistically significant level when moving from informal speech to reading passages aloud to reading word lists. In a study of nine Thai ESL learners in New York, Beebe (1980) provided evidence that the Thais

transferred the socially conditioned trilled Thai [r], which represents formality, into formal English listing. The Thais increased their use of trilled [r] to a statistically significant level in formal English listing style over interview conversation style. In the recorded interview conversations, they never once used trilled [r], but rather adopted new interlanguage variants or the flapped [r] Thais use in careful conversation. The 1974 study of Thai usage focussed on the social stratification of the R variable, whereas the 1980 ESL study discussed the stylistic stratification. However, data were available on both types of stratification in both studies, and there was consequently no doubt that it was a social marker that was being transferred.

Transfer of a Sociolinguistic Indicator

The second type of sociolinguistic rule transfer is that of a sociolinguistic indicator. An indicator, according to Labov (1970), differs from a marker in that its use is not stylistically conditioned; rather its choice is socially conditioned and its use correlates with non-linguistic variables such as setting, addressee, or socioeconomic status of the speaker. The empirical studies of sociolinguistic rule transfer known to this author contain examples of transferred markers not indicators; however, there is informal evidence that the second category exists. The normal volume of speech is an indicator of sex, for example, in Japanese, with men tending to speak at a higher volume than women. ESL teachers frequently report that Japanese women transfer a low volume level into English. I have observed this among Japanese women studying English grammar for a Master's degree in TESOL. Cammack and Van Buren (1967, cited in Loveday, 1982) claim that

Japanese women transfer lowered volume, breathiness, openness, and raised register into English and that this results in a negative evaluation by native speakers that they either lack intelligence or are speaking appropriately for intimate male-female conversation.

A second example of an indicator is the Thai lower class [f] for /khw/. Beebe (1974) found that [f] was an indicator in Thai, used almost exclusively by speakers in her lowest occupational prestige category who had only had four years of schooling. The [f] may be subject to some stylistic variation in this group, but it is present to some degree in all styles for uneducated lowest status Thais and categorically absent in all styles for educated upper status Thais. It is transferred into English only by low status speakers, acting as a transferred indicator of social class.

Consonant cluster simplification varies according to lexical items, a phenomenon documented by Beebe (1974). The distinguished Thai scholar, William J. Gedney (personal communication), has observed the transfer of the indicator [f] for /khw/ in English "queen"; however, he believes the indicator is not transferred into all English lexical items beginning with /khw/, such as "quick" or "quiet." It is possible that the very strong cultural significance of the queen in Thailand, a monarchy, as opposed to the frequent irrelevance of royal terms in modern American society, may have something to do with the transfer of [f] in the word "queen."

There are no empirical studies on this item. Examples are hard to find because the group that uses [f] for /khw/ (lower class speakers with four years or less education) rarely learn English as a second language. Nevertheless, the one documented example verifies that a sociolinguistic

indicator can be transferred, and it is suggestive of the notion that the cultural relevance of a lexical item affects the likelihood of transfer occurring.

A third example of an L1 indicator which may transfer into L2 is the high-high tone in Thai, used exclusively by female speakers, on the first half of a reduplicated adjective. This extra high tone is an intensifier, paralleled by the use of "very" in English. Whereas Thai women say either: dii maak ("good" "very") using an intensifier, or dii dii ("good" "good") using a high-high tone on the first adjective of a reduplication, English speakers use only lexical intensifiers like "very" or "really." (English intonational contours are not parallel to the Thai tonal contrasts.) A Thai princess was heard to transfer the female indicator of high-high tone into English, saying "good good" in English to express the meaning "very good" (William J. Gedney, personal commmunication), documenting transfer of an indicator.

Pragmatic Transfer

Pragmatic transfer is a huge field wide open for empirical research. Broadly defined, it includes investigation into the transfer of knowledge about how language is used (i.e., pragmatics). Thus, studies on sociolinguistic appropriateness, indirectness, politeness and deference are all relevant. It encompasses transfer of communicative competence in performing speech acts as well as knowledge of conversational management (turn-taking, hedging, pause-filling, topic-nomination, topic-switching, attention-signalling, conversational opening and closing, etc.). It also includes transfer of the speaker's competence in putting sentences together to form coherent, cohesive

spoken or written discourse. Thus, it embraces norms studied by linguists specializing in pragmatics, conversational analysis, ethnomethodology, and discourse analysis.

I have chosen the term "pragmatic transfer" also used by Schmidt and Richards (1980) and Clyne (1975, cited in Schmidt and Richards, 1980) as a cover term for all these related phenomena. When more empirical research has been completed, it is likely that subcategories will be created. For now, however, the term "pragmatic transfer" will include research on "transfer of sociocultural competence" (Olshtain, 1983) and "discourse accent" (Scarcella, 1983).

Much of the work on pragmatic transfer has focussed on speech acts (Searle, 1969). Speech acts involve linguistic units such as apologies, promises, warnings, compliments, requests, invitations, refusals, expressions of gratitude, and expressions of disapproval. Clearly, the actual forms are language specific in all of these, but the acts themselves, and even many of the factors that affect them, are universal, i.e., common to all languages. Speech acts have been the primary focus of attention for investigation into transfer of sociocultural competence, but they are, naturally, only one small piece of the pie.

The problems in studying pragmatic transfer are somewhat different from those of studying sociolinguistic rule transfer. With rule transfer, one of the main difficulties is finding a variable L1 pattern that might transfer. Then, a detailed analysis of that sociolinguistic alternation in the native language is prerequisite to analysis of the variation in interlanguage. (A detailed analysis of variation in the target language is also desirable.) With pragmatic transfer, however, we are dealing with a complex set of

behaviors--not with a single linguistic rule. Whereas the areas of interest are much more obvious--i.e., we could predict that apologies, compliments, insults, etc. would be relevant--there are no comparable rules of "correctness" as in phonology and morphology. The cultural factors that affect the linguistic choices are greater, and the variations are not as easily described by a finite set of definable alternatives. This is simply in the nature of discourse analysis as opposed to phonological and morphosyntactic analysis. Content in discourse is intimately fused with form so that the options of what can be said are virtually unlimited.

Common to both categories, however, is the difficulty in determining whether transfer has actually taken place. Are similarities and differences between the interlanguage and the target language actually due to transfer? Though a problem for the study of transfer on all levels, this is especially difficult on the discourse level. Similarities are not necessarily due to positive transfer of L1 knowledge. In the case of universals, transfer is not needed to explain similarity since all languages would be similar. And there is always the possibility of acquisition in the second language without transfer from the L1. Nor can differences between IL and TL be assumed to stem from negative transfer (i.e., "interference"), where L1 knowledge leads to error in the L2. As error analysis has demonstrated, developmental processes can lead to errors that occur regardless of native language.

Despite the problems in analysis, native speaker norms have been thought to transfer into a second language on the speech act level. Cohen and Olshtain (1981) analyzed the apologies of 44 college students in Israel--32 native speakers of Hebrew learning intermediate-level ESL and 12 native

English speakers. They compared native English apologies, native Hebrew apologies, and apologies by native Hebrew speakers using English as a second language. Subjects were asked to role-play responses to eight written situations where apologies might be expected in either Israel or the U.S.--e.g., insulting someone, forgetting a meeting, or bumping into a lady. Non-native English data samples were analyzed in terms of: (1) negative transfer, (2) avoidance of negative transfer, and (3) inadequate linguistic proficiency. Not all differences between native and non-native English were analyzed as negative transfer, but some evidence for pragmatic transfer was found. For example, non-natives were less likely to express an apology after insulting someone at a meeting or forgetting to take their son shopping. They offered repair less frequently than the native English speakers for the situations of forgetting a meeting with their boss and forgetting to take their son shopping (that is, they were less likely to state that they would make up for their mistake). Their deviant patterns reflected native Hebrew norms. In addition, non-natives were less likely than native English speakers to take responsibility (e.g., "It's all my fault") in the situation of bumping into a lady, hurting her, and knocking over her packages. This situation in native Hebrew elicited a 100 per cent offer of repair, and an 83 per cent explicit statement of apology, but none of the native Hebrew speakers took responsibility in their native language. It is impossible to prove that the frequency differences, reported in percents, reflect negative transfer rather than incomplete acquisition due to lack of exposure. However, the researchers judged the data to be suggestive of transfer, and if significance levels are made available for the data from this project, the evidence will be even stronger.

Olshtain (1983) reported on a related study of apologies in Israel where the target language was Hebrew, rather than English. She collected data from 63 subjects--36 subjects (12 each) using native English, Russian, or Hebrew and 27 from L1 English or Russian backgrounds using Hebrew as a second language. She analyzed her data in terms of the five semantic formulas adapted from Fraser (1981) that were used in Cohen and Olshtain (1981): (1) expression of apology, (2) explanation, (3) acknowledgement of responsibility, (4) offer of repair, (5) promise of forbearance. The semantic formulas were found to be "universal" (i.e., present in all three languages studied). However, the average frequency of appearance for each formula was not consistent across languages. English had the highest rate of apology on all semantic formulas. Hebrew had the lowest on all except the offer of repair. Thus, the general pattern was:

English > Russian > Hebrew

On the offer of repair, native Hebrew apologies outnumbered Russian.

According to Kellerman (1978, 1983) and Jordens (1977), learners' intuitions about language specificity versus language universality are a major factor influencing transfer. Applied to the apologies data, the perception of language specificity would suggest that learners think all languages have different ways of apologizing. Language universality would imply that norms for apology are common to all languages. Olshtain found that these perceptions did in fact seem to affect pragmatic transfer. English-speaking learners of Hebrew as a second language tended toward a language specific perception of apologies. They claimed that English speakers apologize more than Hebrew speakers, and they in fact apologized less when speaking Hebrew than when speaking native English.

Russian speakers, on the other hand, tended toward a more universal perception of apologies, i.e., they thought that the need to apologize was a universal, dependent on one's feelings of responsibility, not on the specific culture's norms. Russians, who use more apologies than Hebrew speakers in their native tongue, apologized even more in Hebrew than in Russian. Just as they overrated the need to apologize in Hebrew, they overused apologies. Thus, both groups were influenced by their perceptions of the need to apologize. There was no blind, mechanical transferring of exact patterns, but knowledge about the native language in relation to the target language seemed to play an important role.

In sum, Olshtain (1983) discusses several factors which affect sociocultural choices of speech act strategies for apologizing. These include:

1. transfer of native language sociolinguistic norms
2. perceptions of language specificity vs. universality
3. specific situation (forgetting a meeting vs. bumping into a lady)
4. perceived seriousness of the offense
5. status or distance of the apologizee

A partial replication of Cohen and Olshain (1981) was done in a small pilot study in New York City. Uliss-Weltz (1983) administered the same instrument to six Israelis studying at the English Language Institute of Queens College. The Cohen and Olshtain instrument involved a written description in Hebrew of the situation that required a role play. The role play was then done in English. One week later, Uliss-Weltz administered her own new instrument with situations designed to be very similar, but not identical (to avoid test effect). The new instrument described the apology situation

in English, not Hebrew, just prior to the required role playing in English. Uliss-Weltz found that the language used to give the setting (i.e., explain the apology situation) did not affect the frequency of responses that reflected transfer. However, it did increase the degree of apparent transfer. Subjects accepted a higher level of responsibility (typical of English speakers) and used a tone judged to be stylistically more appropriate according to American norms when the situation was defined in English. Thus, using the native language to ensure comprehension of the target language task had the effect of increasing level of transfer. Uliss-Weltz hypothesizes that her subjects, having lived in the U.S. two or more years, were somewhat acculturated, and that newly arrived Israeli students would display even more NL transfer.

Two other studies on apologies were done at UCLA by graduate students of Cohen. Ford (1981, cited in Olshtain and Cohen, 1983) studied three native speakers of Spanish and three native speakers of English. The Spanish speakers apologized twice as often in their native language as did the native speakers of English. Interestingly, they also apologized twice as often in English as a second language. Despite the small sample size, this study provided evidence for pragmatic transfer of sociocultural norms of apologizing.

The other study was a jointly conducted set of three projects (Castello, 1981, Kim, 1981, and Wu, 1981, cited in Olshtain and Cohen, 1983) based on the work of Cohen and Olshtain (1981). Evidence for pragmatic transfer was found by Wu in a comparison of English and Chinese. Chinese subjects intensified regret much more than English subjects in their native language and also in English as a second language. Their Chinese had three times as

much high intensity regretting as native English, and their ESL had twice as much. Thus, while the ESL pattern was not identical to either the NL or the TL norm, the pattern, native Chinese > ESL > native English, suggests that pragmatic transfer was involved. Whereas Hebrew speakers had underused expression of regret in ESL, Chinese speakers overused it. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) suggest that pragmatic transfer is contributing to the situation where native English speakers perceive Hebrew speakers as "rude" in ESL, and Chinese speakers as "overly polite." Native language sociocultural norms seem to affect target language usage in important ways, but it is clear these factors are intertwined with others in complex ways. More empirical data are needed. They should be gathered in both natural and experimental settings, and the data must be subjected to statistical evaluation.

Schmidt (1983) found evidence for pragmatic transfer in the speech of Wes, a 33-year-old native speaker of Japanese learning English in Honolulu. Although many examples of Wes's sociolinguistic competence were thought to stem from idiosyncratic personality factors, Schmidt posits that two types appear in the data on speech directives. Directives involve getting a listener to do something, and they include requests, orders, pleas, hints, and suggestions. Schmidt found evidence for transfer of Japanese language norms in requests implying criticism which threatened the listener's face. Specifically, Wes received a cold cup of hot chocolate in a restaurant, but was extremely reluctant to lodge the complaint himself. First, he tried to get the native speaker to complain for him and request a new cup. Then he tried indirect hints such as glancing at the cup and saying only "Ah, Miss." Finally, when rescued by a second native speaker, Wes was embarrassed, softly muttering "Sorry" under his breath. Schmidt does not cite data or studies on Japanese norms of politeness, but asserts that this indirect

manner of conveying directives implying criticism is typically Japanese and is therefore evidence of NL transfer of sociolinguistic competence.

Schmidt's second example of pragmatic transfer involves hinting directives. Unlike the previous example, the hinting involved NL pragmatic transfer of linguistic strategies. The preceding complaining request involved transfer of norms about when to perform the act, not how to accomplish it linguistically. Wes conformed to English norms in hints which imply a request by mentioning a reason why the action is desired (e.g., "This is all garbage" for "Put it out".) In addition, however, he frequently transferred a Japanese pragmatic norm of hinting his request by questioning if there was a reason not to perform the action rather than by mentioning the reason for it (e.g., "Are you chilly?" as a hint to open a door to let in cool air.) Americans understand "It's stuffy in here" as a hint to open the door because it gives the reason, but they do not recognize a question like Wes's as a hint. Again, Americans perceive this as extremely indirect. It seems, however, that it is an accepted linguistic hinting pattern in Japanese that is being transferred in English.

A final example of pragmatic transfer comes from Wes's speech (Schmidt, 1983). In this case, like the complaint over cold chocolate, the transfer involves native Japanese sociolinguistic competence about the appropriate timing for expressing gratitude during a phone call. Wes prefers to say an immediate "thank you" for a service rendered when speaking on the phone, whereas Schmidt notes the American preference for working it in later in the conversation.

Takahashi (1984) reports an example of pragmatic transfer in the apologies of an adult Japanese learner of English writing a letter to the Columbia

University Housing Office. The letter contains nine sentences, four of which begin with "Excuse me." The first sentence consists of "Excuse me" plus a self introduction. The next three examples precede requests with "Excuse me." And the final sentence reads "I sincerely apologized to you for my want of courtesy." After reading Takahashi's example, I noticed that a Japanese applicant for student financial aid began four paragraphs of a short personal statement with "Excuse me." According to Takahashi (personal communication), Japanese norms of sociolinguistic appropriateness allow, and at times even require, "Excuse me" as a preface to a direct or indirect request, whereas American English regards this apology as unnecessary for requests to officials if they are simply performing their regular, expected duties. Borkin & Reinhart (1978) note that Japanese students also make errors based on pragmatic transfer in their use of "I'm sorry" to express sympathy about a minor complaint, whereas Americans would use it for serious condolences and substitute "That's too bad" when someone says, "I have so much homework to do!" (p. 65).

Scarcella (1983) discusses "discourse accent"--her term for transfer at the discourse level. Investigating conversations between 15 pairs of strangers in southern California (5 Spanish-Spanish, 5 English-English, and 5 ESL-English,) Scarcella found differences in topic selection, ordering of topics, use of paying attention, and pause fillers (words to hold one's conversational turn). Spanish speaking subjects ranged in age from 19 to 24 and had come to the United States from Jalisco, Mexico before the age of 7. Thus, the purpose was to demonstrate the persistence of transfer in advanced learners, not the presence of it in beginning learners.

Scarcella found evidence of discourse accent in the use of two

conversational features--back channel cues (signalling attention) and pause fillers. Spanish speakers exchanged back channel cues (like "si," "yes," "uhum") with their interlocutor significantly more frequently in Spanish than English speakers did in English. They also transferred this socially reinforcing verbal pattern into English so that their nonnative English contained significantly more than native English. Spanish speakers also signalled attention by repeating part of the interlocutor's previous utterance. For example, one Mexican American female said "...my little girl is eight months" and the other echoed "Eight months." Native English conversations displayed this significantly less frequently. Interethnic conversations fell between the two norms.

Scarcella also found evidence of pragmatic transfer in the use of pause fillers like "ya know," "uhm," "este," or "pues" which serve to maintain the speaker's turn while pausing to think. Significant differences were found among the conversations, with Spanish speakers using more pause fillers before answering questions and more consecutive pause fillers than English speakers. This sociolinguistic phenomenon was transferred into their ESL, giving them a "discourse accent" even at their very advanced level of proficiency. Interestingly, none of the 20 subjects were aware of differences between Spanish and English in these conversational features. Scarcella argues that her data provide evidence in support of Kellerman's thesis (1979) that transfer occurs when L2 speakers perceive their L2 as identical to their L1.

Despite consistent differences in the topic selection of Spanish and English conversations, there was no evidence for transfer of the Spanish pattern into English. Spanish speakers always discussed family relationships

and interlocutors' ages, whereas English speakers rarely did. The Spanish speakers avoided such topics perhaps because they were highly proficient in English. Pragmatic transfer on topic selection would have been more likely in the early stages of their acquisition of English when L1-L2 differences might not have been apparent yet.

Schmidt and Richards (1980) suggest that pragmatic transfer does occur in topic selection, even though Scarcella did not find evidence of it in her study of advanced learners. Richards mentions that Asians commonly ask questions like "Are you married?" and "How old are you?", while Arabs will ask "How much did that cost?" While living in Thailand for two years, I noticed that Thais ask the prices of your clothes and possessions, whether you have a boyfriend/girlfriend, if you are married, whether you have children and (if you don't) why not. This is also true in the Philippines. They advise you on how to find a husband/wife and frequently assess, repeat, and reassess whether you are fat or thin, tall or short. These completely acceptable topics transfer into the ESL conversations they have with virtual strangers, though they decrease in frequency as Thais become acculturated. Likewise, English speakers in Thailand persist in transferring into Thai the English conversational opening for casual frequent meetings ("How are you?"), whereas Thais would ask "Where are you going?" and Chinese-Thais would inquire whether you had eaten yet. Americans living in Thailand or the Philippines may take months or even years to accept the inquiry "Where are you going?" Their first L2 reaction is to answer literally, with all details. Later, they may try to avoid answering. Peace Corps Volunteers have been known to become so annoyed at the question that they desperately tried to prevent others from asking it by embarrassing them with flip

answers like "to the bathroom", and even, "to a whorehouse." The third stage seems to be one of acculturation and accommodation in which the learner answers the question with standard automatic responses like "out," "shopping," "to work," or "nowhere," in Thailand, or "just there" in the Philippines with the characteristic pointing of the lips. The question is at this point accepted as the functional equivalent of English "How are you?"--it opens a conversation--and the answer is as perfunctory as "fine".

Telephone conversation openings also vary from language to language, and pragmatic transfer on conversational openings is common. Schmidt and Richards (1980) note that Japanese callers, not receivers, speak first. Egyptians open with a request for the identity of the hearer because they have a high expectation of wrong numbers. Godard (1977) reports that the French must apologize for the inconvenience of the interruption, whereas Americans do not see this as necessary and frequently leave out the apology. I once committed this sin of omission, offending a French friend. I hadn't seen her in years and was calling long distance from the U.S., so I thought my impending trip and wish to see her were appropriate openers. I did not even consider an apology for disturbing her. She explained that it was dinner time in France and made it very clear I was presenting an inconvenient interruption. I then apologized, of course, and the conversation continued smoothly.

Scollon and Scollon (1981) discuss in detail the problems that arise from L1 transfer in interethnic communication. As they show, discourse features affect the image one presents of self. Transferred patterns may lead to unfortunate misunderstandings. For example, English speakers report that Athabaskan Canadians keep silent, avoid direct questions, never start

a conversation, don't talk about themselves, leave without saying anything, are inexplicit, and are slow to take a conversational turn. English speakers receive a negative impression of Athabaskans who transfer these native language norms into English. And Athabaskans perceive English speakers as talking too much, always talking first, bragging, asking too many questions, interrupting and dominating the conversation in English.

Blum-Kulka (1982) studied directness/indirectness in the speech act strategies of native Hebrew speakers in Israel, native English speakers in the U.S. and Canada, and Hebrew second-language learners in Israel whose native language was English. Subjects were asked to fill out a written discourse completion test which required supplying a directive as part of the dialogue. Levenston (1970) claims that Israeli society allows for more directness in social exchanges than American society does. Assuming this difference, Blum-Kulka looked to see if American learners of Hebrew would transfer English social norms of indirectness into their second language. She found the learners did violate TL norms. However, their choices did not conform precisely to either NL or TL social patterns. When there was greater indirectness, it sometimes, but not always, seemed to stem from sociolinguistic transfer.

The best evidence for transfer comes from her examples of non-shared rules of directness. For example, Blum-Kulka claims that in dialogues Israeli policemen are believed to be very direct, even impolite, whereas North American ones are viewed as less direct. Some 78 per cent of the native Hebrew speakers chose a direct imperative, "Move the car," as a policeman's line in a dialogue where the policeman has just caught a driver leaving his/her car where it shouldn't be. On the other hand, American

learners of Hebrew only chose this alternative 51 per cent of the time. They also selected statements of obligation ("The car should be moved") and hints ("This is a no-stopping zone") that Israelis chose as well, but much less frequently. Blum-Kulka explains this higher choice of indirect speech acts as stemming from pragmatic transfer of American social norms.

In a second example from her data, Blum-Kulka discusses asking directions from a stranger. All native speakers of English used the expected, "Could you tell me please how to...?" preceded, in general, by an attention-getter like "Excuse me." All but one Israeli selected a direct request for information, "Where is the railway station?". In Hebrew as a second language, however, Americans correctly used the socially appropriate direct request 82 per cent of the time, but transferred in the English politeness formula (rarely used in Hebrew) 18 per cent of the time.

Blum-Kulka recognizes that it is a matter of speculation whether successful rendition of forms is due to positive transfer or to ease of acquisition (due to L1-L2 similarity) in cases where the NL and the TL have shared norms. She seems to favor transfer as an explanation, however, in some cases. Hebrew and English share the use of imperatives, ability questions ("Can you...?"), "Why not?" questions, and "Do you mind if...?" questions as request strategies. American learners of Hebrew learn the TL forms easily. Blum-Kulka argues that transfer explains her data from "Why not?" questions as requests. Three forms were found--one unique to English, one unique to Hebrew, and one shared by both languages. The only form that was appropriately used by Hebrew L2 learners was the shared form. Of course, one could counterargue that if transfer were involved, both English L1 forms would show up in the Hebrew L2 data. The example is a reminder

that evidence consistent with a hypothesis of transfer does not actually prove transfer. And secondly, it points up the need to realize that explanations are not mutually exclusive. These data are consistent with a simultaneous analysis of sociolinguistic transfer and ease of acquisition due to L1-L2 similarity. These two interpretations are neither inconsistent nor mutually exclusive.

Socially Motivated Transfer

Socially motivated transfer is the third category of sociolinguistic transfer. It is distinct from sociolinguistic rule transfer in that it does not necessarily involve applying a native language sociolinguistic rule to the target language. It is distinct from pragmatic transfer in that it does not necessarily involve transfer of speech act or discourse level competence. Socially motivated transfer involves transfer from L1 into L2 that is intended to achieve a social psychological purpose. Since the category involves the reason for transfer, it may overlap with other types of sociolinguistic transfer. There may be numerous functions of transfer, but four purposes, cited in Beebe and Giles (1984) as reasons for variation, provide a good range. These purposes (or functions) are: (1) accommodation; (2) conforming to norms; (3) negotiation; and (4) self-expression.

Transfer for Accommodative Purposes

Accommodation is the term Howard Giles, a British social psychologist, applies to adjustments or modifications which make one's speech become either more similar or less similar to that of the listener (e.g., Giles and Smith, 1979; Beebe and Giles, 1984; Giles and Powesland, 1975). When one's speech is adjusted to become more like that of the listener, it is

called convergence. As an example of this, Thais sometimes use English pronouns (pronounced /aay/ and /yuu/) in their speech and use American /r/ when speaking to Americans. When someone shifts away from the listener, it is called divergence.

Second-language speakers can assert their ethnic distinctiveness and diverge linguistically by increasing their level of native language interference. Likewise, they can express their feelings of solidarity with their native-speaking listener and converge by lowering their level of native language interference. In a study of ethnic Chinese Thais in Thailand, the subjects, who were bilingual in Chinese (their native language) and Thai (their second language), converged in Thai toward an ethnic Thai listener by lowering their interference level--that is, by decreasing their Chinese accent (Beebe, 1977a, 1977b, 1981). They used fewer short vowels for long ones, fewer incorrect final consonants, and in general made their Thai sound more Thai (e.g., Beebe and Zuengler, 1983). With a Chinese listener, their rates of interference rose significantly. We might suggest this is because they had heightened feelings of ethnic Chinese identity in the presence of a Chinese.

Though convergence is perhaps the norm in conversation where listeners want a smooth exchange, divergence occurs frequently when a speaker feels ethnically distinct and wants to assert that distinctive identity. Gatbonton-Segalowitz (1975) found that French Canadians who had strong feelings of ethnic distinctiveness sound more French in their pronunciations of /θ/ as in "think" or /ð/ as in "then." In short, speakers may converge or diverge to express their cultural identity or their personal feelings.

But it is also possible for speakers to diverge from their inter-

locutor while intending to converge. Known as psychological convergence (e.g., Beebe, 1981; Thakerar, Giles, and Cheshire, 1982), this involves convergence toward a stereotype or expected norm. Platt and Weber (in press) report that Singaporean hotel receptionists attempted to converge psychologically toward their English-speaking guests during a courtesy campaign, but due to their misconceptions about target-like usage, they failed in their attempt. For example, one Chinese receptionist asked a tourist, "What can I do for YOU?" stressing you, following a Singaporean intonation pattern. Later, when asked where to cash a traveller's check, the receptionist replied, "Over there MADAM," stressing madam. Australian tourists rated this and other exchanges neutrally or negatively, but never positively. One even said, "I must say, they're rather a rude lot" (p. 8). Psychological convergence often leads to negative transfer which offends the listener. Similarly, foreigner talk, which is based on psychological convergence, can be very annoying.

Transfer for Normative Purposes

A second social psychological purpose of interference is expressing situational or sociocultural norms. Both first- and second-language speakers vary what they say and how they say it according to social norms they value. Once acquired, these norms are hard to give up. Let's first look at examples of what non-native speakers choose to say, rather than how they say it.

One of my favorite examples occurred when I was in graduate school at the University of Michigan. A Japanese friend invited me to go to the Student Union for coffee. She started telling me that she was going home to Japan for a visit, then that she was going to go with an American man we

both knew, then that she thought her parents would like him, then that he was not a typical American male, then that he understood the Japanese mentality and way of life. After listening attentively for what seemed like a very long time, I said, "Michiko, are you trying to tell me that you are getting married?" With an exasperated glare, she exclaimed, "Yes!" I realized I had been crass. I did not allow her to follow the Japanese sociolinguistic norm of avoiding a blunt statement and using instead an artful array of sentences that imply the point.

We follow sociolinguistic norms in what we say, but also in how we say it. We can follow the native language norms or the norms of a particular target language group. Some of the best examples of following native language norms are the examples of sociolinguistic rule transfer previously discussed. Trilled [r] has been decreed by Siamese royalty to be the proper Thai /r/. Beebe (1980) showed that nine Thais in New York trilled their /r/'s in English. The Thais transferred trilled [r] into English only in formal contexts and used [l] for /r/ in informal contexts. This is exactly the sociolinguistic norm that exists in Thai. Thus, Thais transferred a Thai sociolinguistic norm into English. They changed languages, but maintained the Thai norm.

In addition to positing the general category, sociolinguistic transfer, I would like to propose that there is a category of sociolinguistic avoidance as well. A Japanese student of mine reported a good example of this from Japanese. Two friends of his (one American, one Japanese) were teaching ESL in Tokyo at a junior high school. Both reported that their students refused to call them by name. One student strategy was to practice sociolinguistic transfer and say, "Would the teacher like

us to hand in our papers now?" The other was to practice what I am calling sociolinguistic avoidance. Students are not supposed to say "you" to teachers in Japan. Therefore, if they did not want to use the word "teacher" incorrectly, they said nothing or said something that did not require a pronoun at all, such as "Is it time to hand in our papers now?" In other words, they avoided the problem.

When interference serves normative purposes, it can also involve a merger of L1 and L2 forms in a sequential unit. Beebe (in press) called these forms "composites," citing phonological examples like [r] for English /l/ by Japanese speakers. Penny LaPorte (personal communication) reports a lexical example which appears to be socially motivated interference for normative purposes. Not wanting to disobey Penny's instructions to call her by first name, yet needing to conform to Japanese norms of using the instructor's title, her Japanese students called her "Teacher Penny." Thus, it seems that second-language speakers can try to conform simultaneously to both native and target language norms.

Sociolinguistic norms can be so strong that students will simply refuse to learn a form. Another example of sociolinguistic avoidance was given to me by a high school Spanish teacher in New York who reported (personal communication) that some of her American students refuse to use the double negative in Spanish. They argue that it is "unnecessary" or "silly." Basically, they are conforming to a strong norm in English. After years of having it drummed into their heads that double negatives are sinful, they find it hard to use them, even though they know they are correct in Standard Spanish. This interference error is not simply a result of unconscious misguided overgeneralization from the native language to the foreign language.

It is the result of following Standard English norms. It is a socially motivated interference error.

In the preceding examples, interference for normative purposes was always based on native language norms, but it is also possible to have variation related to two conflicting target language norms. Wolfram (1973) describes this in the speech of Puerto Ricans who make the transfer error of substituting /f/ for /θ/ as in "bof" for "both." He claims that NL interference is compounded by adoption of legitimate Black English norms. The use of /f/ is in part regular interference and in part a reflection of the fact that Puerto Ricans who live in black neighborhoods may identify with blacks and be asserting this social identification via their language.

Transfer for Negotiative Purposes

A third social psychological purpose for transfer is negotiation. Negotiation means managing or negotiating identity via linguistic choices. The most obvious examples of this involve total language switches. Scotton and Ury (1977) write about the situation in Kenya where Swahili is the language of national solidarity, local languages reflect ethnic ingroup solidarity, and English reflects education and Westernization. The choice of language to initiate a conversation negotiates one's status and identity (Scotton, 1980).

People may increase or decrease native language transfer to negotiate identity in a second language. Giles and Powesland (1975) note that a Scottish accent is a boon to doctors in England, whereas a Pakistani one is not. They point out that psychiatrists may cultivate an Austrian accent in English rather than try to stamp it out.

Once I pointed out to a fully fluent Chinese-English bilingual that

his initial th's were not pronounced like Standard English but rather as stigmatized forms like "dese," "dem", and "dose." He immediately switched his pronunciation. I was very pleased. Thinking I had discovered something special, I told him shortly thereafter that he had virtually no accent in English, except in the pronunciation of one contrast: final "l" versus final "d." He had trouble distinguishing "tuna on a roll" from "tuna on a road." I pointed out that this was the only marker of his Chinese origins. I now suspect he unconsciously knew that. Although he frequently asked for pronunciation practice on this contrast, his accent never budged. In fact, he claimed not to even hear the difference. His ear was so good and his accent so native that I always felt he wanted to keep one ethnic marker in his speech. Of course, he never said as much, but it seemed right. And I decided it was not my job to insist that his accent not reveal his origins. He is proud of his Chinese background.

Transfer for the Purpose of Self Expression

The fourth social psychological purpose of speech variation is self expression. I am using "self expression" as a cover term. It encompasses expression of individual feelings, revelation of personality, artistic expression, and presentation of oneself in a positive light. An anecdote best serves to illustrate artistic self expression and positive self presentation. A UCLA TESOL student once interviewed a French professor on tape for a course in error analysis. The professor's syntax was perfect, but her French accent was very strong, despite the fact that she had lived in the United States since adolescence. When the student asked why the professor thought she had retained her accent, the professor glibly replied,

"Because American people think I'm adorable." The UCLA French professor chose to keep her strong French accent in part because she liked (and Americans valued) this form of ethnic identity assertion, but also, it seems, because she thought it presented her in a positive light.

Both first and second languages reflect personality and express personal feelings. Giles (undated, p. 113) reports an example of refusal to use a second language as a means of expressing anger or protest. A monolingual English-speaking American student was able to buy gas in English in the city of Montreal as long as he had American license plates. However, once obliged to get Quebec license plates, he found that his same station attendant replied, "ne comprends pas," when he asked in English to buy gas. This refusal to speak English expressed the attendant's feelings about monolingual English speakers in the bilingual, but predominantly French, city of Montreal.

Coupland (1984) speaks of the need for positive, competent, self presentation. First-language transfer and sociolinguistic avoidance in L2 pronunciation probably result from the desire for positive self presentation. American high school boys may avoid pronouncing the front-rounded vowel /u/ in French if they don't like the image of pursed lips. Japanese students may resist pronouncing /θ/ because they don't like to stick their tongues out. They also resist initial /r/ and /w/ because of the lip rounding required. An ESL teacher in Japan reports that Japanese students think the /ae/ vowel sounds silly, so they substitute an [a] sound. In other words, aesthetic considerations that are culturally based affect the degree and presence of transfer. There isn't much research on this topic, but there is reason to believe that we can get hard evidence for self expression as a strong motivating force behind the level and type of transfer

that occurs in second language speech.

Conclusion

In sum, transfer is not uniquely a psycholinguistic process of interlingual overgeneralization. Sometimes, it does not involve overgeneralization at all. There are three categories of sociolinguistic transfer--sociolinguistic rule transfer, pragmatic transfer, and socially motivated transfer. Sociolinguistic avoidance also affects second-language performance. All sociolinguistic transfer and sociolinguistic avoidance can be viewed as powerfully motivated by social psychological factors.

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